

# There's no place like Duxbury

## Dalton readies for DMS principal job

By Andria Farrell  
ANFARREL@CNC.COM

New Duxbury Middle School principal Blake Dalton is not in Kansas any more, and no matter how hot it gets in New England, it will never compare to the heat in Arizona.

It will probably take a few weeks for everyone to get the "Wizard of Oz" jokes out of their system, but Dalton, who originally from Kansas, plans to show the courage, heart and brains needed for his new home. He will replace Principal Jeffrey Knight.

"This is a beautiful area," he said. "I am really excited about being here and starting to plant some new roots. I spent 20 years in a new area, and now I want to spend another 20 years in Duxbury."

For the past 20 years, Dalton has worked in education in Arizona. The first six years of his career he was a teacher while he worked towards his master's degree in education counseling. During his years of teaching, he was also a teacher in charge, a teacher, who if an administrator was not available, would fulfill administrative abilities in the office by taking care of discipline and other duties.

Later, Dalton was a sixth- and seventh-grade principal as well as an athletic administrator in



Blake Dalton

Arizona in a district with 25,000 students with 23 elementary and six middle schools.

Dalton, whose wife is originally from Marshfield, said he and his wife wanted to relocate closer to family to raise their two boys, ages 4 and 18 months. He said South Shore versus small-town Kansas was no contest.

"I feel very blessed. This is a dream come true. Our house (in Arizona) sold in three weeks, and I landed the dream job," Dalton said.

Dalton, who moved his family here in September, has been a permanent substitute in a fifth-grade classroom in Cohasset for a teacher on maternity leave. Before taking the permanent substitute position, he also substituted in Marshfield and Scituate.

"I am enjoying it immensely," he said of his substitute position.

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"I have a nice group of kids. This is a great way to get to know the South Shore."

Dalton said education has been a lifelong journey that began when he was in high school taking part in a peer counseling classes. Outside of school, he also took part in an evening program with parents going through a divorce, working with children whose parents were in counseling. He said the fun he had working with the children is what started him getting interested in education as a career.

"Even today, seeing the light bulb go off in a child is a great feeling," Dalton said. "To help in that way, and see the joy on their faces all of sudden, it is a great feeling."

He said he also had a couple of really good role models, both positive and negative. The negative role models had a greater impact on him and led him to want to become a teacher.

"The very first day, they (children) have an excitement about learning. It takes two seconds to extinguish that flame, it takes a real effort and skill to keep that flame burning," he said.

Superintendent Susan Skeiber

said she is looking forward to him starting as the DMS principal.

"In the process we went through, we had over 20 people involved in the interviewing, and he was the first choice in all groups that interviewed him," she said. "I am looking forward to his energy and interest with middle school students and impact as we are working to continue to move forward in my 'good to great.'"

Dalton said his No. 1 goal right now is getting to know the staff and the community, and letting them get to know him by building relationships and opening doors and creating paths to the future.

"This opportunity popped up at the right time and right place. I have been nothing but overwhelmingly impressed by the professionalism and dedication everyone showed in Duxbury; everyone so positive," he said. "I have big shoes to fill. This is a really solid school doing great things, I want to make sure people see that and keep the ball rolling."

Dalton will begin his new job on July 1.